

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1 and 3-14 remain in the application. Claims 2 and 15 have been canceled. All of the claims remaining in the application have been amended to eliminate the reference numerals. Reference numerals are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the elimination of the reference numerals is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Additionally, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 2. Claim 3 has been amended to depend from claim 1.

Claims 1 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Watanabe, U.S. Patent No. 5,259,111. However, the Examiner merely objected to claims 2-8 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner indicated that each of claims 2-8 would be allowed if rewritten into independent form including all of the limitations of claim 1.

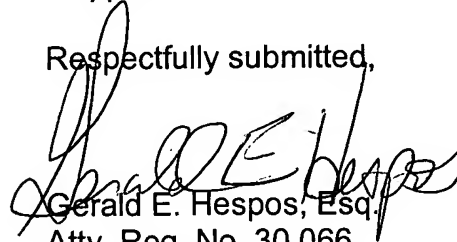
Rejected claim 15 has been canceled.

Rejected claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 2. Accordingly, amended claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 3-8 all depend from allowable claim 1, and hence should be in condition for allowance as well.

Claims 9-14 were allowed as filed. Those claims remain in the application, and the only amendments pertain to the elimination of the reference numerals.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter, and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Hespos", is written over the printed name.

Gerald E. Hespos, Esq.

Atty. Reg. No. 30,066

Customer No. 001218

CASELLA & HESPOS LLP

274 Madison Avenue - Suite 1703

New York, NY 10016

Tel. (212) 725-2450

Fax (212) 725-2452

Date: June 1, 2004